

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 029294

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:PFOR

SUBJECT: ARTICLE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

BY JONATHAN POWER

FOLLOWING IS AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "HARD QUESTIONS AND SOME
ANSWERS AT MALTA TALKS" WHICH APPEARED IN THE INTERNATIONAL
HERALD TRIBUNE, FEBRUARY 2, 1978:

RABAT, MALTA -- IAN SMITH, THE WHITE LEADER OF RHODESIA, IN
HIS TALKS IN SALISBURY WITH BISHOP MUZOREWA, REV. SITHOLE
AND CHIEF CHIRAU, HAS ACCEPTED THE RIGHT OF THE MAJORITY
BLACK POPULATION TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. HE HAS GIVEN AWAY
THE RIGHT TO BE PRIME MINISTER. HE HAS GIVEN AWAY THE
RIGHT OF THE WHITES TO CONTROL THE CONSTITUTION IN 1988.

HOW IN FAIRNESS COULD ONE ASK FOR MORE? DOESN'T THE IDEA
OF A TRANSITION TO BLACK RULE WHICH THE RESIDENT WHITES
AND BLACKS THEMSELVES FREELY DETERMINE APPEAR MORE SENSIBLE
THAN ATTEMPTING TO LINE UP, AT A COMMON STARTING LINE,
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ELEMENTS AS DISPARATE AS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GUERRILLA
ARMIES AND THE RHODESIAN ARMY'S GREY'S SCOUTS, NOT TO
MENTION FIVE SETS OF FEUDING NATIONALIST LEADERS, THEIR
SUPPORTERS IN THE COUNTRIES SURROUNDING, PLUS THE BRITISH,
THE AMERICANS AND PERHAPS, TOO, THE SOUTH AFRICANS?

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN, IN AN OBSERVER ARTICLE ON JAN. 22, WENT EVEN FURTHER. HE ASKED HIMSELF, DRAWING ON HIS EXPERIENCE OF DEALING WITH THE IRA AS A MEMBER OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT, WHAT HIS POSITION WOULD BE IF THERE WERE A FAIR ELECTION UNDER SMITH'S NEW ARRANGEMENTS AND THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WENT ON FIGHTING AND KILLING. HE DECIDED HE WOULD THEN FEEL ABOUT THE FRONT AS HE DOES ABOUT THE IRA -- TERRORISTS WHO SHOULD BE CRUSHED. ARTICLES LIKE THIS SUGGEST THAT IF THEY ARE NOT TOO CAREFUL, THE BRITISH AND U.S. NEGOTIATORS HERE, FOREIGN SECRETARY DAVID OWEN AND U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE UN ANDREW YOUNG, MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES THE ISOLATED SUPPORTERS OF AN OUTLAWED GUERRILLA ARMY THAT WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION FEELS SHOULD BE RESISTED RIGHT DOWN THE LINE.

INSTINCTS

HOWEVER, THE O'BRIEN ARTICLE RAISES MORE QUESTIONS THAN IT ANSWERS. HERE ARE A FEW.

WHAT IS THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIO FOR A POST-SMITH-TYPE ELECTION IN RHODESIA? IT IS THIS: IN SALISBURY, AT THE HEAD OF A BLACK GOVERNMENT, WOULD SIT BISHOP MUZOREWA, A CHURCHMAN-POLITICIAN WHO HAS ONLY SURVIVED AS LONG AS HE HAS BECAUSE HIS SENSIBLE INSTINCTS SOMETIMES TRIUMPH OVER HIS POLITICAL INEPTITUDE.

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WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE BRITISH AND THE AMERICANS IN THIS SITUATION RECOGNIZED MUZOREWA'S GOVERNMENT? THE "FRONT LINE" PRESIDENTS OF TANZANIA, ZAMBIA, BOTSWANA AND MOZAMBIQUE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THEIR LINGERING SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE WEST HAD BEEN PROVED RIGHT. FROM NOW ON THERE WOULD BE NO COOPERATION. THE WAR AGAINST RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE WAGED WITHOUT RECOURSE TO WESTERN SENSITIVITIES.

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IN SHORT, AS MR. YOUNG SAYS: "IT WOULD BE A HAPPY HUNTING GROUND FOR PEOPLE FROM OTHER IDEOLOGICAL PERSUASIONS WHO ARE SEEKING TO DO DEVILMENT. AND THEY COULD DO SO WITH A MINIMUM OF INVESTMENT."

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DOES ALL THIS MEAN THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAS HAD THE BRITISH AND THE AMERICANS BY THE TAIL IN MALTA? NO, IT DOES NOT AND THE TALKS DO NOT SUGGEST IT.

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